

been about bringing the marginalized out from the shadows. So the entire Kennedy clan should be so proud of this man, PATRICK KENNEDY, and this Nation should be as grateful for his presence in this Congress.

Let me emphasize, Madam Speaker, the fact that mental health parity would not have become law had it not been for PATRICK KENNEDY. That is a legacy for which this Nation should always be grateful. PATRICK KENNEDY's legacy will continue for generations to come. We can't thank him enough for his service to this Nation and this Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SMITH of New Jersey addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

DR. RICHARD LEVIN COMMENCEMENT SPEECH EXCERPTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, last May, President Richard Levin of Yale University delivered a commencement speech, and I think the message he conveyed in that speech is worth repeating here for the Members of this body and also for the American people. I am going to read a portion of the speech and then include the entire commencement speech for the RECORD. These are the words of Dr. Richard Levin:

"Aristotle tells us that we are by nature political animals. But one wonders whether we would recognize the species we have become. Eighteen months ago, the United States elected a new President who was prepared to address intelligently and collaboratively the most pressing problems confronting the Nation—education, health care, climate change, and improving America's image in the rest of the world. Late in the election campaign, the financial crisis intervened, and economic recovery and financial sector reform were added to this ambitious agenda.

"What has happened since does not inspire great confidence in the capacity of our system to deal intelligently with important problems. Why is this happening?"

Dr. Levin says: "Let me make two observations and then trace their implications for how you might conduct yourselves as citizens and participants in political life. First, contemporary political discussion is too often dominated by oversimplified ideologies with superficial appeal to voters. And, second, political actors in the United States give too much weight to the interests of groups with the resources to influence their reelection and too little attention to the costs and benefits of their actions on the wider public.

"In the Federalist No. 10, James Madison addresses the second of these observations in the context of the fledgling republic established by the U.S. Constitution. He notes that the tendency to pursue self-interest can never be entirely suppressed, but it can be mitigated by the proper design of political institutions.

"The protections that our form of government offers against ideology and faction have attenuated greatly since Madison's time, for at least two reasons. First, mass communication increases the opportunity to sway voters by appeal to simple formulations. Of course, the rise of mass communication could be a tool for raising the level of discourse through more effective education of the electorate. But it interacts with the second attenuating factor: that the money required to win elections through the media has created a dependence on funding from special interest groups. And it is these interest groups who distort reasoned dialogue by sponsoring oversimplified messages.

"To move beyond ideology and faction, we need to raise the level of political discourse. You, as the emerging leaders of your generation," he told the students, "must rise to the challenge.

"In the first paragraph of the Federalist No. 1, writing about the infant republic whose constitution he was endeavoring to defend, Alexander Hamilton asserts:

"It has frequently been remarked that it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice.

"There is much in America's history of the past two-and-a-quarter centuries that would incline us to conclude that Hamilton's question has been answered in the affirmative. Our institutions of representative government have proven themselves to be durable, the rule of law has prevailed, and the scope of personal liberty has expanded far beyond what the Founders envisioned. But today, in the face of oversimplified ideology and the dominance of narrow interests, we must wonder again whether Hamilton's question is still open.

"Women and men of the Yale College class of 2010," Dr. Levin said, "it falls to you, the superbly educated leaders of your generation, to rise above ideology and faction, to bring to bear your intelligence and powers of critical thinking to elevate public discourse, to participate as citizens, and to answer the call to service. Only with your commitment can we be certain that our future will be decided by reflection and choice in the broad best interest of humanity. You can do it. Yes, you can."

Madam Speaker, Dr. Levin made this call to the young women and men who will lead our Nation in the years to come. But all of us should listen.

As we end this Congress and begin a new one, our Nation faces challenges as complex as they are consequential, and we stand at a tipping point. More special interest money is flooding our political system than ever before. Congress is the most partisan it has been in history. The media is often more a source of polarization than information. And the American people don't know whom to believe, if anyone; and I don't blame them.

The result is that our ability to have serious discussions about serious challenges is severely damaged. And now arguably the most significant challenge facing our country is figuring out how to have those conversations. That must be our calling for the 112th Congress. If we fail in this effort, we not only fail Congress, we fail our country.

BACCALAUREATE ADDRESS: RECLAIMING POLITICS

President Richard C. Levin, Yale University

What a journey you have had! Four years of exploring a place so rich with treasure: courses taught by some of the world's most brilliant and creative scholars and scientists, a library with few peers, museums that expose you to the full variety of nature and human cultures, musical and theatrical performances of the highest quality, vigorous intercollegiate and intramural athletic programs, and classmates whose excellence never ceases to astonish—and all this set within the imposing and inspiring architecture of a campus that is itself a museum. You have had the chance to interact with classmates from 50 states and 50 nations, and the great majority of you have taken advantage of Yale's abundant international programs to spend a semester or a summer abroad.

In the classroom, you were encouraged to engage thoroughly and rigorously in thinking independently about the subjects you studied. You were challenged to develop the powers of critical reasoning fundamental to success in any life endeavor. Outside the classroom, as you worked productively in the hundreds of organizations you joined or founded, you exercised the skills of teamwork and leadership. In your overseas experiences, you deepened your capacity for understanding those whose values and cultures differ from your own—preparing you for citizenship in a globally interconnected world. You may not recognize this in yourselves, but you are ready for what is next.

Understandably, you may be uncertain and a bit anxious about what lies ahead. But, if history is to be trusted, you will find many paths open to you. Because of the talent you possessed before you came here, as well as the intellectual and personal growth you have experienced here, you will find, with high likelihood, success in your chosen endeavors. And we expect you to stay connected. The vibrant life of this university is greatly enriched by the deep commitment and active participation of its graduates—think of all the master's teas and guest lectures and college seminars offered by our alumni. And keep in mind that when you thanked your parents a few moments ago, you might also have been thanking the generations of Yale graduates whose gifts past and present supported half the total cost of your education.

Perhaps I am overconfident about your prospects for personal fulfillment and professional success, but I don't think so. If you will concede my point for the sake of argument, let's ask the next question, one so